



CLASSY: The Clearaudio Concept vinyl player has a floating tone arm and rotary dial with three speeds



The Concept vinyl player is so cool... and warm! *For the record, this is my slickest ever turntable*

It's a nostalgic time of year as friends, family and even the television start to gaze longingly at the past with a hankering for old comedy, faces and food. My preferred dose of nostalgia though, comes via music. If you're going back in time musically, the resurgence of the vinyl record means that the memories can sound better than they have in decades if you have a player that's up to the job.

Unpacking the Clearaudio Concept reveals the brushed steel body and minimalist, stylish looks of the German-crafted turntable. Measuring around 16.5in x 14in, it's reassuringly sturdy at 7.5kg.

The slim, ergonomic dimensions mean it's easy to position on a shelf.

The Concept is somewhat unusual among its peers, as it really is almost a plug-and-play device. The moving-magnet Concept V2 cartridge is shipped with this player but it is fitted to the tone arm with settings like weight and bias set before the turntable leaves the factory. That makes the set-up less daunting for hi-fi newcomers and leaves you with little to do except attach the included drive belt, platter and power supply.

I decided to use the included mini-spirit

THE GADGET BUZZ WITH ANDY O'DONOGHUE



Clearaudio Concept Turntable €1,190

★★★★★

level to make sure the Concept was sitting perfectly flush on my shelf surface. If it wasn't, all of the turntable's feet are threaded allowing them to be easily adjusted to assist with perfect levelling. I connected the phono-

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leads to my amplifier, the same amp I use for TV surround sound and I was ready to go.

The Concept plays 33 and 45 but also 78rpm records. Its speed is controlled by a large rotary dial and after setting that to 33, I decided on something a little punchy, David Bowie's *Let's Dance* album.

The magnetically suspended tone arm is a joy to use. It feels almost as if it's hovering in space and lowers neatly on the record rather than dropping down like players of the past.

The sound the Concept produces is warm, and so unlike today's compressed digital audio. It deals with mid and high tones exceptionally well and deep bass sounds airy.

Three albums later I hadn't experienced any of the crackle, pop or skip that was present when I owned a 1980s vinyl player. Clearaudio has built-in anti-skating technology to this player, and it's adjustable – helping to give you a skip-free music experience.

As warm and enjoyable as the audio experience is, there is also a sense of satisfaction in using such a wonderfully engineered piece of tech. This is hand-crafted tech at its best and makes asking friends around to listen to records seem perfectly fashionable again.

■ For more information, see clearaudio.de

MY PICK OF THE WEEK'S APPS



CHRISTMAS BAKE SHOP

ANDROID FREE

While you make the punch in the kitchen, this fun game app lets the kids bake, mix and cook cupcakes, cakes, doughnuts, cookies, ice cream and popsicles.



VIDEO CALLS WITH SANTA

iOS €2.99

Why settle for letters or phone calls when you can have an interactive video call with Santa himself. Plus, the video calls are automatically recorded for playback.



ARCHERY KING

iOS FREE

A compelling archery contest with customisable bows and arrows that will make you want to try and master different locations and levels as well as unlock the location's secrets.



MEE DJ

WINDOWS FREE

A mixing console with a life-like interface for anyone who loves music. Add tracks, mix them to create something unique and upload it to the cloud or share via social media.



LIMBO

ANDROID €5.39

A game with an eerie dark difference, this adventure game has been called near perfect. It looks like a horror-filled adventure but at its heart is an intriguing well-designed puzzle.